

# The COVID-19 Pandemic and Its Implications to Learning Strategies

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to determine: (1) the critical phenomena faced by several nations when the COVID-19 Pandemic reached the globe; (2) the effects of the learning process in schools and colleges when it is appropriate to stop face-to-face learning; and (3) the readiness of the government, educators, and the society to face the COVID-19 Pandemic. A purposeful sample was used to select four nations, namely Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, and the United States, for this study. Data collection was carried out by monitoring key terms, namely COVID-19, teaching and learning, educational policy, ICT in education, distance learning, and school policy in each region. Since the data were taken from secondary sources, there were many parallels between the findings of this analysis and the original source. The study findings indicate that all nations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have changed their education policies from face-to-face to online learning. In the education sector, almost all countries have adopted measures to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, including the planning of ICT instruction, student credit subsidies, and changing education bills.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Learning in ICT, Online learning.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a 2019 coronavirus disease spread case. The COVID-19 stands for Coronavirus Disease 2019. A new type of coronavirus, called SARS-CoV-2, is responsible for this disease. The city of Wuhan, which is located in Hubei Province, is where the virus was first recognized on December 1, 2019. The number of cases of COVID-19 sufferers worldwide so far is 68.8 million individuals [1]. After mid-March 2020, in particular in Indonesia, online learning activities have become a choice for the Ministry of Education and Culture to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus [2]. Several levels of schools such as kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and college, have to perform this online education activity. By the end of 2020, almost all learning practices in classrooms have been announced to be stopped in Indonesia and also several countries around the world.

Many countries have taken strategic and tactical steps in dealing with it in the face of this legitimacy. The most effective option, although not inherently successful, is online learning [3]. This form of approach

to learning has not been adequately prepared. It definitely has an influence on the teaching approaches used by educators. The same pattern can also be seen in the reception of student learning that is quite diverse, often not knowing the teacher's content or delivery. Parents or guardians of students face the same thing.

### 1.1. Research Problems

1. When the COVID-19 Pandemic reached the world, what important phenomena were faced by many countries?
2. What are the consequences of the learning process when face-to-face learning has to be halted in schools and colleges?
3. What is the readiness of the nation, students, and society to face the pandemic of COVID-19?

### 1.2. Purposes for Analysis

1. To discover the main phenomena faced by many nations when the COVID-19 Pandemic reached the globe.

2. Face-to-face instruction must be halted in order to find out the consequences of the learning process in schools and universities.
3. To find out about the readiness of the nation, educators, and society to face the Pandemic of COVID-19.

## 2. METHODS

Using a purposeful survey, this analysis was carried out by selecting four countries, namely Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, and the United States. The conditions for the sampled countries are to enforce lock-down or large-scale social restrictions policies, avoid face-to-face learning at least temporarily, and have relatively limited and strong ICT capabilities.

By taking secondary data from the internet network, the method of collecting data was carried out by tracking key terms in each region, namely COVID-19, teaching and learning, educational policy, educational ICT, distance learning, and school policy. Since the data were taken from secondary sources, there were many parallels between the findings of this analysis and the original source.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Indonesia

For more than eleven months, the COVID-19 outbreak that has struck the nations has had an effect on improvements in teaching and learning practices. As online learning activities have become a choice for the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoE) to prevent the COVID-19 spread in mid-March, Indonesia is no exception. Various levels of schooling, from primary, junior high, high school to college levels, perform this online educational activity. This phase is suitable but without proper planning. As a consequence, in the face of this dramatic shift, many educators stutter.

According to Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education and Culture, "We have to be honest that the adaptation process to online learning is also very difficult. At least there is still learning going on rather than no learning at all." The acceptance of learning from students is often quite varied in line with that because sometimes they do not understand the teacher's content and delivery. Parents or guardians of students particularly witness a huge learning shock again. During online learning hours, parents who are busy working are forced to accompany their kids. Children who are normally in school automatically turn to do home learning activities [8].

The education sector in Indonesia is certainly disrupted and affected due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, where around 45 million pupils

cannot resume their school-based learning exercises. Distance learning adapted to the different characteristics of regions in Indonesia should be considered by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) and the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag). Distance learning adds to the obstacles for learners who have trouble accessing education, so it is important to acknowledge the diversification of distribution media other than the internet. To accelerate the implementation of distance learning, district education offices must provide financial resources and more technological guidance for schools in their area, such as access to recording studios and facilities, in addition to utilizing the School Operational Assistance funds. Private community schools should also not be ignored by such guidance [2].

A radio program or the use of postal services for areas with poor access may be alternatives. In assisting schools, local municipalities need to take a more involved role without having to wait for central government initiatives. On the other hand, in order to properly carry out distance learning across the country, large-scale capacity building programs need to be implemented in Indonesia. A large-scale need for state-private partnerships among relevant ministries (Kemendikbud and Kemenag) and suppliers of telecommunications services and their hardware is shown by the COVID-19 crisis.

In order to broaden the usage of distance learning in Indonesia, the partnership will use the existing infrastructure. There are several barriers to online learning in Indonesia. Some of them are economic limitations, insecure access to the internet, and the effectiveness of online learning. Many teachers already understand that learning is interrupted, which is only interpreted as giving students questions from the instructor. Raising the spirit of our education In the introduction of online learning, the phrase "Free Learning" repeated by the Minister of Education and Culture does not seem to have moved educators, let alone students.

The crisis of COVID-19 also prompted schools to reallocate greater budgets for spending on distance learning. Regulation number 19 of 2020 of the Ministry of Education and Culture and Circular number B-699 / Dt.1.1 / PP.03 / 03/2020 of the Ministry of Religion make the use of BOS funds for distance learning implementation. This involves the expense of linking students and teachers to the internet, as well as purchasing computers for distance learning help. Presidential Regulation No. 54 of 2020 raises the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture by 96 percent, from IDR 36 trillion to IDR 70.7 trillion [9]. There has been no clear explanation of the usage of these significant rises, although many expect that the funds will be used to help more distance learning initiatives.

### **3.2. South Korea**

South Korea is one of the most technologically advanced countries in Asia. How has the education in South Korea responded to the COVID-19 Pandemic? Based on a search of several references, it was found that when the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country were in mid-January 2020, the numbers immediately spiked in the following weeks. On that basis, the South Korean government, as in many countries, raised the national alert level to the highest category and declared a national health emergency. Almost the entire population of South Korea fell into a state of despair as if attacked by an invisible enemy without any warning.

However, after five months, through accurate action, the situation in South Korea appears to be changing for the better. The total number of positive cases of COVID-19 is decreasing, and the mortality rate remains low, thanks to high levels of testing and diagnostic capabilities, combined with careful contact tracing, social distancing, and personal sanitation measures, such as wearing masks and sanitizing. Thus, the country has been able to control and reduce the COVID-19 outbreak.

Seeing this fact, the South Korean government has reopened all schools over the country. Starting June 12, 2020, all students, except those with a positive diagnosis or symptoms of the disease, have returned to school after nearly four months without setting foot on campus (the academic year in South Korea usually starts in early March) [10]. Even though students are not physically allowed to attend school during the outbreak, classes can continue to use the online education model. This kind of learning mode is an inevitable choice.

That way, in South Korea, online learning is gradually being implemented, starting with students in the final year of middle and high school on April 9, 2020, and fully expanding to all remaining classes on April 20, 2020. One of the main reasons behind the idea of online learning is to take advantage of some time for teachers and the ICT infrastructure of education to make the necessary preparations while reducing unexpected problems. Some of the key strategies taken by South Korea in dealing with COVID-19 are: (1) expanding the learning technology infrastructure for the public, (2) supporting increasing the capacity of teachers in using learning technology; and (3) preventing the digital divide and supporting marginalized groups [4].

As education authorities and schools decided to replace the physical opening of schools with online learning, the first step was to expand the ICT infrastructure. This may sound strange to some, given South Korea's longstanding reputation as a global ICT pioneer. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many as 99.7% of South Korean households had full access to

the internet, and 99.9% of teenagers used high-speed internet in their daily lives, according to a 2019 report from the Korean Ministry of Science and ICT.

South Korea's achievements in this area far exceed the world average. All pupils from several levels started from elementary to high school join the online or networked class completely, with roughly 470,000 classrooms created on the KERIS e-Learning Site and the EBS Online Classroom Platform combined. Apart from online classes, to meet the needs of educational in various condition or special necessities, EBS adds the number of TV channels for more. The role of teachers in educational success cannot be overstated - neither can online education. Initially, many teachers were disoriented when schools closed and they were told their classes would be taught online.

To avoid the negative impact, free advanced gadget rental administration is given by the government of South Korea. Therefore, students from poor families who do not have digital devices are given priority to borrow devices from their schools. The private sector also contributed to a lot of equipment. In addition, through the implementation of the zero-rating policy, students have received free mobile data access to educational websites with generous support from the three major telecommunication companies in South Korea (KT, LG, and SK). In addition, to fully support students from low-income families, the government installed Internet service in their homes and provided a monthly subsidy of US \$ 17 for Internet fees.

### **3.3. Japan**

The Nippon Foundation, through their research, indicated that education gaps directly affect the public monetary productivity in Japan. Japan's new government centers on responding to the pandemic and resuscitating the economy, it is essential to focus on how schooling strategy finds a way on this forward-looking objective.

The reality is that, the COVID-19 pandemic has pointed out the issue of child and family destitution in Japan. During the deliberate conclusion of schools in Japan the previous spring, the impeded understudy populace attempted to get food help and other additional social administrations.

In Japan, a significant number of these kids rely upon their school to get nutritious food. While schools is being closed recently, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) received 1.89 billion yen in crisis reserves, some of which is utilized to repay families for school snacks. Some school areas send snacks to families, with the Osaka neighborhood government offering free school snacks to all rudimentary and middle school understudies from conceivable April to fiscal 2021 to

facilitate the monetary weight forced on family units by COVID-19.

On the other hand, Japan has made a move to monetarily uphold understudies influenced by COVID-19 through scholarships, grants, or loans, and some provide financial assistance to understudies who need instructive related things for online learning. Concerning the public authority, MEXT is at present giving help of 200,000 yen to “those who have difficulty continuing their studies at universities or other educational institutions so that they do not leave their studies.”

In Japan, reality proves that the Pandemic of COVID-19 has likewise indicated to the globe that web-based or online learning may turn out to be much more significant later on. However, around 1 out of 20 Japanese pupils lack the facilities needed in this learning method, for example, a calm room to study, a personal computer (PC), and course readings or textbooks. An overview by the Ministry of Education in April 2020 indicated a small number of Japanese state-funded schools have had the option to adjust: just 5% of local government agencies across the country are arranging on the web classes while schools are closed because of the pandemic.

Besides that, the digital divide among metropolitan and provincial territories and across financial lines further complicates the progress to an online method. In a promising public-private partnership developed at the behest of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Communications, Japan’s top three mobile phone companies announced that they would remove some additional data plan charges for users 25 and under. Japan is not the only one to confront these difficulties. The G20 Education Minister’s assertion on this outbreak clearly recognizes impeded gatherings are being disproportionately influenced.

As referenced above, Japan figured out how to beat the primary flood of COVID-19 before the end of February 2020 through the execution of early discovery procedures and early detection to clusters. In such manners, the Japanese government underlines the significance of dodging the “3C,” referring to closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded places with numerous individuals close by, and close contact arrangements such as close discussions.

Nonetheless, since the second half of March 2020, the quantity of cases of infection for which it is hard to recognize a transmission route has started to increment. On April 7, 2020 the Japanese government proclaimed a highly sensitive situation for COVID-19. This assertion is made with the supposition that without making a crisis moves, the circumstance of COVID-19 disease could surpass the limit of the Japanese clinical system

and cause genuine harm to individuals’ lives and also wellbeing and majorly the public economy.

The Law on Special Measures for Pandemic Influenza and Preparedness and Response for New Infectious Diseases gives the legitimate premise to the assertion. This law was drafted in 2012 as a reaction to the worldwide H1N1 influenza pandemic from 2009 to 2010. Amendments to the Law on this outbreak were enacted on March 13, 2020. Under this law, the prime minister can announce a highly sensitive situation if necessary and take different measures to prevent the widespread of the infection and protect public capacities.

The affirmation permits prefectural governors in affected territories to expect occupants to remain at home except on important tasks, including going to the medical clinic, purchasing food, and working. Governors are likewise permitted to request the temporary closure of unimportant businesses. Nonetheless, the Japanese government does not have the legitimate power to force lockdowns and punish citizens who ignore such requests like in other countries. This non-mandatory action in an emergency is a further characteristic of Japan’s response and reaction to this pandemic.

Schools across Japan must adopt contingency measures and plans in case any student becomes infected with the coronavirus. The July case did not lead to the spread of infection in schools, but the principal said he would continue to do the best possible care so that children can feel comfortable when they come to school. After nationwide school closures, many schools resumed classes in June and the situation of closure since then has varied depending on the individual schools and regions. According to the educational ministry, between June 1 and July 21, a total of 84 primary, junior, and senior high schools were temporarily closed, many of them for up to three days.

### **3.4. The United States**

The United States is a very technologically advanced country. However, the COVID-19 attack has attacked some of the population without exception, as has been experienced around the world. On March 12, 2020, the U.S. US-ED (U.S. Department of Education) declared there will a consideration in the one-year waiver focused on evaluation or assessment and accountability requirements that can be influenced by the recent outbreak [6]. Waivers can loosen state evaluation necessities or lower study bills and identify low performing schools if they are closed for most of the year. The ER will also consider waiving the 95% test participation rate and chronic absence measure [5].

Correspondingly, on March 20, 2020, SoE, Betsy DeVos reported that the Department will grant waivers

to any state unable to evaluate its understudies because of ongoing national emergency, providing assistance from federally mandated testing requirements for this the school year.

On the other hand, the state that accepts this waiver may likewise acknowledge a waiver of the prerequisite that this test information is utilized in a statewide accountability system because of a public crisis. As of April 1, 2020, ED has allowed federal testing requirement waivers for all states. This waiver gives state educational institutions the adaptability to defer evaluation and responsibility prerequisites in the Success Each Student Act for the 2019-2020 school years [11].

What about study time in the United States. ED released "Q&A" on offering services to understudies with incapacities during the pandemic (Vegas, et al. 2020). According to the rules, if a school district does not provide general directions because of COVID-19, schools are not needed to offer types of assistance to understudies with disabilities during this event. If general instruction is offered during school closures, districts ought to guarantee that understudies with incapacities also have the same access and opportunities as students in general education. In the event that a pupil or understudy with a disability stays at home due to being infected by COVID-19, the school should keep on offering instructive types of assistance to that understudy.

Although online or distance learning can substitute direct guidance, there is the limitations that important to be noted. Numerous understudies cannot meet the supporting technology to study remotely. A study from the Associate Press found that 17% of US understudies do not have personal computers at home and 18% of students do not have access to the internet with fast connection. At the start of the crisis, teacher priorities focused on the well-being of students and families, with numerous educators performing assignments not conventionally connected with instructing - 72% of our respondents examined how families deal with fundamental food, wellbeing, and feelings or emotional needs [12].

School principals talk to parents or guardians about well-being (86%), provide printed version of learning resources (55%), check student welfare at doorsteps (42%) and run a food bank or distribution of lunch scheme (52%). They work closely with local authorities and social services, and manage problematic free school meal voucher schemes. This shows how important the role of primary schools is in supporting communities and reacting to the needs.

As anyone might expect, assignments are the first concern for educators in schools in the quartile with the highest free school meals, where the need is greatest.

48% of educators in this school announced that they were becoming more aware of "How poverty and overcrowding impact the lives of my students". Only 6% believe that "Most families in my school have the necessary resources and knowledge to support their children's learning at home". 63% made it their top priority to teach during the lockdown, "Ensuring children without online access continue to have opportunities to learn". In contrast, the number of educators in the lowest quartile taking free school meals was 16%, 46% and 47%, respectively [7].

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In several countries, the advent of the COVID-19 Pandemic generated widespread pressure on education and learning practices. In the history of education in the preceding period, this phenomenon was never encountered. With all its expectations and obstacles, the schooling and learning phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic period in schools and colleges has shifted dramatically from an offline to an online learning method. Many countries have developed reform policies, such as providing ICT learning, budget reallocation, simplifying research bills, and so on in the face of changes in the learning process in the COVID-19 Pandemic period.

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